



Senator Mike Hewitt's Eastsiders' Report



A Legislative update to the people of the 16th Legislative District

Monday, January 14, 2002

The 2002 Legislative Session has begun, and I wanted to share with you some of the main issues I have before the Legislature. As many of you know, I recently resigned my position as the Executive Director for the Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce. I believe our state is at a critical crossroad, and to better serve you and the 16th District, I need to focus completely on finding long-term solutions to the problems affecting our state.

Below I have outlined some of the key elements I will be looking at during this session. If you have an idea or a comment about any of these issues or are concerned about another issue, feel free to contact me at 1-800-562-6000 or hewitt_mi@leg.wa.gov.

Budget

Recently, Governor Locke released his suggestions and updates to the 2001-2003 budget based on the changing economic conditions. The budget was debated heavily last year, and this year will be no different. The next step will be for the Legislature to review Governor Locke's budget. The Senate will then craft its own proposal, and pass it to the House. Finally, both the Senate and the House will vote on the final budget, and present it back to the governor. I want you to know that I maintain my strong support for a budget that protects our vital and essential services for taxpayers and our most vulnerable citizens.

Transportation

Each time you drive down the road, you probably think the same thing I do – What happens to the money we pay to maintain our roads? Last year, transportation was a hot issue, and it will be again. Governor Locke has already proposed a 9-cent per gallon gas tax increase. However, I believe that a tax increase is not the only solution. We need something that clearly defines what will be done with our money. We, as taxpayers, need accountability. At the moment, my Republican colleagues and I are pushing to put transportation on a fast track, so that we have something definite by April.

Health Care

As many of us have elderly parents, we see how quickly the cost of health care is rising, making it more difficult to receive the treatment needed. It is a burden on everyone. We need to keep our vital services up and running to protect the most vulnerable in our community. I will be looking for solutions to the rising cost of health care that protect families, children and the elderly.

Education

Last year, I focused on implementing alternative routes to teacher certification (SB 5695) and integrating technology into the classroom (SB 5906). Senate Bill 5695 passed, and Governor Locke signed it into law. For 2002, I will continue to focus on integrating technology into the classroom. I support parents and their desire to have their children prepared for a lifetime of learning by a caring teacher in a safe school.

Environment

The 16th District is home to a renewable power source (a wind farm). Developing this resource is admirable and provides an example to the rest of the state that a balance can be found between nature and man. Water resources for our farms is also an important issue, which must be looked at to protect ourselves from future droughts. I support a balanced approach to protecting the Northwest's natural resources and preserving Washington's quality of life.

115-B Irv Newhouse Building • PO Box 40416 • Olympia WA 98504-0416

Phone (360) 786-7630 • e-mail: hewitt_mi@leg.wa.gov • Toll-free Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000

Senator Hewitt's Eastsiders' Report

Business

Recently, I participated in a study done by the Senate Republican Caucus called "Working for Washington," which examined how we can improve Washington's business climate. The results discuss the current business conditions and what we can do to help support our local businesses. The study also suggests ways to create an economic stimulus package. I will continue to focus on improving our business climate, so that Washington once again can be one of the top places in the nation to do business. Please let me know if you would like a copy of the study's results.

Would you like to receive periodic "In-Touch" updates like this one?

During session, I send out email updates on legislative action. I have been sending these to 16th District residents who asked to be on such a mailing list before session started in January 2001. If you are not already on my email "In-Touch" list, I would be happy to add you to it. If email is unavailable, I can send you a hard copy.

Please let me know if you would like to receive your email updates by sending your name, home telephone number and home or business mailing address to hewitt_mi@leg.wa.gov.

Another way to reach me is to call the legislative toll-free hotline at 1-800-562-6000 or speak with Kita, my Legislative Assistant at 360-786-7630.

Please know that you are welcome to contact me if you have a question about pending legislation, state law, or a problem with a state agency. I work for you and it is my privilege to serve you in the Washington State Senate.

Regards,

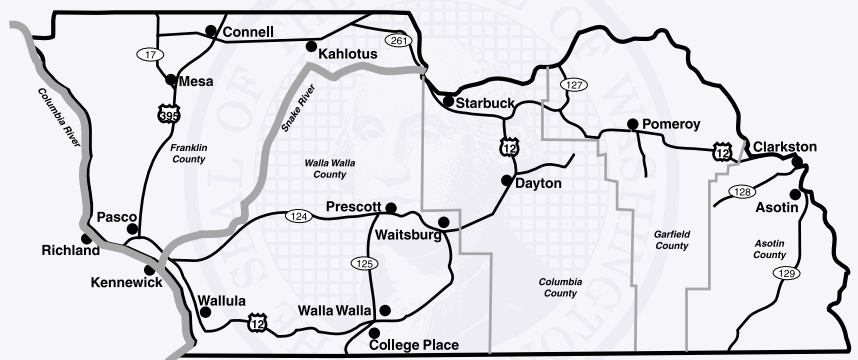


Senator Mike Hewitt

Keep In Touch

Senator Mike Hewitt
115-B Irv Newhouse Building
PO Box 40416
Olympia WA 98504-0416
Phone (360) 786-7630
e-mail: hewitt_mi@leg.wa.gov
Toll-free Legislative Hotline:
1-800-562-6000

16th Legislative District



PO Box 40416 • Olympia, WA 98504-0416

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
OLYMPIA WA
PERMIT#133

